

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

a.81
U55
Cop. 2

Inside Information

United States Department
of Agriculture

Office of Governmental
and Public Affairs

Washington, D.C.
20250

December 14, 1981

JAN 25 '82

Volume 3, No. 29

INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

Page

Happy Holidays! New "INSIDE INFORMATION" Format for Electronic Mail.....	1
USDA Begins Electronic News Dissemination.....	1
Electronic Mail Lists Expanding.....	2
Lastest Electronic Mail Listing.....	3
Ideas Easier to Transport than People, Peter Drucker Says.....	4
Congressman Communicates Electronically with Consitutents.....	4

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! NEW "INSIDE" FORMAT

With this issue of INSIDE INFORMATION, we embark on a new format for the newsletter of, by and for agricultural communicators employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities.

The new single column format, without any underlining, and with line lengths a maximum of 80 characters, will allow us to transmit INSIDE INFORMATION electronically to those who have "mailboxes" on the Dialcom system.

This will speed the information to you and help us begin to reduce time consuming maintenance of large postal mailing lists.

The 80-character lines also will allow those with 40-character line word processors or terminals to receive the newsletter with a minimum of distortion of the copy.

We will be anxious for response from each of you who receive this issue via electronic mail. -- Stan Prochaska, Assistant Public Affairs Director, GPA.

USDA BEGINS ELECTRONIC NEWS DISSEMINATION

USDA's News Center inaugurated electronic news dissemination via AGNET, a computer data and electronic mail system operated by the University of Nebraska and a consortium of other midwestern and western land grant universities.

And, in January, USDA news releases also will be available through the Dialcom INTERCOMM electronic mail system and through COIN, another computer based system operated by Virginia Tech and serving several states.

The big leap forward is being taken to keep pace with the exploding expansion of use of electronic mail and data transmission systems in the public and private sectors.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has expressed his personal interest in USDA disseminating news and other information via electronic mail and data systems such as AGNET, COIN and INTERCOMM, to those who want and need information from USDA.

The nearly 2,500 users of AGNET can now access USDA releases minutes after they are released in Washington, D.C. and placed in AGNET's computer.

Land grant university extension specialists, county extension agents, state department of agriculture officials, production credit offices, banks and other commercial firms, and farmers who are on the system now may read the entire text of a USDA release long before abbreviated versions are heard on the radio or read in their local newspaper.

Already a couple of farm periodicals are on AGNET, and with the addition of USDA releases to the system, more are expected to subscribe to the system so they can read the latest releases without the usual one to two-week delay when releases are received by regular postal mail.

The 600 Dialcom INTERCOMM users located in USDA, land grant universities and state departments of agriculture will be able to get the same kind of service as AGNET users within a few weeks.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Commerce Department also is considering providing its news releases to Dialcom system users.

Actually, Dialcom has about 30,000 users of its system in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom and expanding, but the majority of current users most likely are not interested in agricultural news stories.

Exploration with other computer based systems, such as CompuServe and the Source, will be initiated early next year.

Ultimate goal of electronic news dissemination is to cut down on the need for massive postal mailing lists for distribution of USDA news releases; to speed the delivery of releases to the public, including news media; and to eventually cut dissemination costs.

ELECTRONIC MAIL LISTS EXPANDING

Number of electronic mail boxes among agricultural communications offices at USDA, land grant universities and state departments of agriculture is growing.

The Dialcom INTERCOMM electronic mail system is beginning to be used more frequently by public information offices to exchange messages.

Several are finding it is a more efficient way than use of the telephone, and certainly quicker than use of the Postal Service's mail system.

Land grant university agricultural extension service and experiment station information offices, where the Dialcom system is now in effect, are being encouraged to get their own mailbox and terminal for more efficient use of the electronic mail system.

State department of agriculture information offices also will be getting additional information about the system shortly, prior to their commissioners and directors being contacted by a systems marketing representative.

And, additional USDA agencies are joining the Dialcom electronic mail system. Already seven agency information offices have mailboxes and two more are planning to join the system.

USDA Office of Governmental & Public Affairs' goal for 1982 is to have all USDA agency information offices, land grant university information agricultural offices and state department of agriculture information officers able to communicate with each other via electronic mail.

As a service to all, the following listing of those agricultural information offices in USDA, land grant universities and state departments of agriculture who now have electronic communication capability is provided on page 3 of this INSIDE.

If anyone is omitted in this listing, let Stan Prochaska know via electronic mail, and we will make sure your office is listed on the next updating (which is expected to be rather frequent).

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS ON DIALCOM ELECTRONIC MAIL SYSTEM

Washington, D.C.

USDA Public Affairs Ass't Dir.	Stan Prochaska	AGR002
USDA News Center	Ray Schleeter	AGR003
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service	Lew Brodsky	AGR005
USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service	Herb Gantz	AGR008
USDA Forest Service (not in operation yet)		
USDA Food & Nutrition Service (not in operation yet)		
USDA Secretary's Office	John Ochs	AGR030
USDA AGR System Control	Nancy Bevis	AGR001
USDA Coop. State Research Service	Mason Miller	AGS3003
USDA Extension Service	Ovid Bay	AGS091
USDA National Agricultural Library	Eugene Farkas	AGS3052
USDA Science & Education Director	Alice Skelsey	AGS3200
USDA AGS System Control	Jerry Paulsen	AGS001
DIALCOM Support (for users)	Jane Weinstein	JANEW
DIALCOM Marketing (for agriculture)	Ken Norris	KENN

California (San Francisco)

USDA-AMS/APHIS Reg. Inf. Office	Ben Darling	AGR022
---------------------------------	-------------	--------

Florida

Fla. Dept. of Agriculture (Tallahassee)	Charles Allen	GFL001
---	---------------	--------

Georgia

USDA-AMS/APHIS Reg. Inf. Office (Atlanta)	Connie Crunkleton	AGR011
---	-------------------	--------

Illinois

USDA-AMS/APHIS Reg. Inf. Office (Chicago)	Herb Jackson	AGR014
---	--------------	--------

Indiana

Purdue University (Lafayette)	Eldon Fredericks	AGS802
-------------------------------	------------------	--------

Michigan

Michigan State University (East Lansing)	Bob Neumann	AGS1227
--	-------------	---------

Minnesota

University of Minnesota (St. Paul)	Gail McClure	AGS2652
------------------------------------	--------------	---------

Missouri

University of Missouri (Columbia)	Dick Lee	AGS1355
-----------------------------------	----------	---------

New Mexico

New Mexico State University (Las Cruces)	Norman Newcomer	AGS1652
--	-----------------	---------

New York (New York)

USDA-AMS/APHIS Reg. Inf. Office	Bryan Killikelly	AGR019
---------------------------------	------------------	--------

North Dakota

North Dakota State University (Fargo)	Chuck Humphrey	AGS1801
---------------------------------------	----------------	---------

Oregon

Oregon State University (Corvallis)	Gwil Evans	AGS1951
-------------------------------------	------------	---------

Pennsylvania (Univ. Park)

Pennsylvania State University	Glen Goss	AGS2025
-------------------------------	-----------	---------

Texas

Texas A&M University (College Station)	Jim Hunt	AGS2260
--	----------	---------

Texas Department of Agriculture (Austin)	(not in operation yet)	
--	------------------------	--

USDA-AMS/APHIS Reg. Inf. Office (Dallas)	Harold Bryson	AGR017
--	---------------	--------

IDEAS EASIER TO TRANSPORT THAN PEOPLE

"Ideas are easier to transport than people," says Peter F. Drucker, the internationally known analyst of politics, economics and society and an influential writer on modern organizations and management.

Drucker anticipates changes in the working habits of tomorrow, with ideas and information being moved rather than people.

"With the advent of the railroad, streetcars and the automobile, we were able to move people, but ideas couldn't be transported, so people had to be brought together," he says in the Dec. 21 issue of U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT.

"Now, through electronic communication, ideas are far easier and cheaper to transport than people. That means we have passed the peak of business travel."

CONGRESSMAN COMMUNICATES ELECTRONICALLY

Rep. Jim Coyne of Pennsylvania has arranged for some of his constituents to bypass stamps and the postal service in passing along their comments and complaints, by sending them direct via electronic mail.

Coyne has instituted a "first of its kind" system that will allow his constituents with access to computer terminals to communicate with his office in a matter of seconds and at low cost.

Coyne said the electronic mail system, which he demonstrated for reporters, was developed with the help of the House of Representatives Information System and Dialcom, a national telephone computer access firm.

"The big advantage is that it combines the best features of the telephone and the mail," the Pennsylvania Congressman said.

For one thing, he said, a constituent can type in and send a message at any time of the night or day, and have it stored in Coyne's electronic mailbox. In the morning, he said, it can be called up on a screen and read with a touch of a button.

In the evenings and on weekends when telephone rates are lower, he said, a person can send a message by computer in only seconds for the same 20 cents that it now costs for first class mail.

He noted the use of personal computers is growing by leaps and bounds, with an estimated million or so already in use across the country.

With estimates that 2.5 million Americans will have home computers within two years, Coyne said he hoped to see other members of Congress follow his lead.

"We've got to make it easier for people to communicate," Coyne said, adding it now takes too long for people to get a response from government agencies.

"If a person watching television sees something on '60 Minutes' that upsets him, he can hook his computer keyboard to the same TV and write a letter to his Congressman that night," Coyne said.

"The next day, I can read his letter and either answer it or forward it to a federal agency. If the agency is plugged into the system, I can forward the letter electronically, too," he added.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to Stan W. Prochaska, Assistant Public Affairs Director, Room 407-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250, to AGRO02 on the Dialcom INTERCOMM system or AGN1DA05 on the AGNET system, or call (202) 447-7454.